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CIA caused Zaire leader's death, daughter claims

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The United States is propping up a corrupt despot in Zaire, and "the same thing will happen in Zaire as in Iran," Julianne Lumumba, daughter of slain Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba told an audience of 30 students at Southeastern Massachusetts University yesterday.

Her father was the first premier of Zaire, known as the Congo when it achieved independence from Belgium in 1960.

Patrice Lumumba was assassinated in 1961, she said, "because he was a threat to the west." She blames the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency for his death.

(In November 1975, the U.S. Senate's Intelligence Committee reported two CIA "officials were asked by superiors in the fall of 1960 to assassinate Lumumba; poisons were sent, and some preliminary steps were taken, but the evidence does not show that the U.S. was involved in his eventual killing," according to the Associated Press).

Turmoil followed her father's death, and in 1965 Col. Joseph Mobutu seized power. Known now as "Mobutu Sese Seko," he continues to run the country, now known as Zaire.

CIA agent?

Mobutu, she charged, is a CIA agent who continues to be propped up by the intelligence agency. "The U.S. is now the staunchest backer of the Zairean regime."

(A former ranking CIA official acknowledged in 1975 that the agency provided money for Mobutu, the AP reported).

Miss Lumumba, a political science student at the University of Paris, spoke in French. Her comments were translated by SMU sociology professor Alex Dupuy.

She is on a 17-day tour of the United States, she said, to draw attention to conditions in her native country. Her tour is sponsored by the All Africa Peoples Revolutionary Party. The party is headed by former civil rights activist Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael has changed his name to Kwame Toure, she said.

Zaire today is a ravaged country, she said. Unemployment is at 47 percent, 60 percent of the country's infants die of malnutrition, and inflation roars at 120 percent, she said.

Mobutu remains in power with an iron hand, she charged. She alleged several massacres of student dissenters in Zaire. An attempted coup by the Zairean army's generals in 1975 was foiled by the CIA, she charged, and the 37 officers involved were executed.

Two "liberation movements" were responsible for the 1977 and 1978 battles in Zaire's mineral-rich "Shaba" region, she said.

Two factions

They are the National Liberation Front for the Congo and the People's Revolutionary Party, she said. The two groups have popular support inside Zaire but need to cooperate. Her eldest brother, Emery Lumumba, 29, is trying to bring the two factions together, she said.

The aim of the groups, she said, is to fashion Zaire into an "anti-imperialist society." The "true masters" of her home country today, she alleged, are the major Japanese, European and American corporations.

Her father's "Congolese National Movement" is "very powerful" inside Zaire today, she said, kept alive by former followers.

"I want to go home," Miss Lumumba said, "but for strategic and tactical reasons I cannot go back."

Mobutu wants her and her family to return, she said. Her mother already lives there, under a kind of loose house arrest. With the entire family there, he could claim their endorsement, she said.

"We don't trust him; it's not very secure."